



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 167

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2021

No. 198

## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit who honors those whose walk is blameless, we praise You for being with us this day. Lord, You have embraced our Nation as a worthy possession, providing us with protection when we need it most.

Sustain our lawmakers as they seek to do Your will. Empower them to see You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly this day and always. May they look to You for guidance, claiming Your promise to direct their steps. In challenging seasons, give them the wisdom to lift their eyes to You, receiving Your grace and mercy.

Most holy God, thank You for Your love and faithfulness.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, November 15, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,

President pro tempore.

Ms. HIRONO thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Graham Scott Steele, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

### TRIBUTE TO PATRICK LEAHY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, earlier today, our distinguished President pro tempore, the senior Senator from Vermont, announced he will conclude his incredible run of Senate service. Senator LEAHY plans to retire at the end of next year, at the conclusion of his eighth term.

Senator LEAHY has served Vermonters in the Senate for longer than anyone in the State's history. Of course, he has also become an all-star

Senate institution in his own right. I think particularly of the opportunities I had to work with Senator LEAHY when we were sharing leadership of the Appropriations Subcommittee for State and Foreign Operations.

It is hard to imagine the Senate without PAT and his lovely wife Marcelle. For now, I just want to salute our colleague on the occasion of his announcement and add my congratulations on his remarkable career thus far.

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Madam President, last week, even more economic data continued to confirm that inflation is hammering working families all across America. In October, consumer prices saw their steepest spike in three decades, the worst inflation surge in more than 30 years.

When I was back home last week, I heard constantly from Kentuckians who have watched their gas prices and grocery prices literally soar. This is happening in every single State. Last month was the fifth straight month in which national consumer prices rose at least 5 percent.

The Democrats' inflation crisis has gotten so bad that Washington Democrats have stopped trying to pretend that it is just transitory and are starting to admit that it is on them to fix it. The same Democrats who spent months denying inflation was a lasting problem, the last people in America to wake up to this reality, are now convinced they are just the people to fix it.

But their supposed solutions are more of the same absurd policies that helped dig this hole in the first place. After months of mostly ignoring the problem, President Biden finally responded to last week's inflation data by insisting that "reversing this trend is a top priority for me."

But—surprise—the President's preferred solution just so happens to be the exact same reckless taxing-and-spending spree his administration has

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S8065

been pushing, literally, for months now.

They cooked up this massive multi-trillion-dollar spending spree back when they were saying inflation wasn't a major problem and it was still time to spend like crazy. But now, miraculously, that same spending binge happens to be their prescription to fight inflation.

Give me a break. This is just a sweeping socialist wish list in search of a justification. This is another megadose of the same radical recklessness that Republicans have warned against all along, that American families are already paying dearly for, as we speak.

But, so far, Democrats seem intent on grabbing the hot stove yet again, and its American families who stand to get burned.

#### VETERANS DAY

Madam President, one final matter. Last week, I had the honor of spending Veterans Day at the groundbreaking ceremony for Louisville's new VA hospital. We are finally going to replace the city's original VA medical center that was built almost 70 years ago. Kentucky veterans are going to get new, expanded options for the cutting-edge treatment that they richly deserve.

The long-awaited groundbreaking was a special day for Kentucky and our heroes. But for me, the celebration also underscored how unfortunate and unacceptable it is when it comes to our legislative duties here in Washington. This Democratic Senate majority is coming up short on supporting our servicemembers past, present, and future.

Today is November 15. The full Senate should have considered, amended, and passed an annual defense authorization bill months ago. That is how it normally works. It is a major bipartisan priority that the Senate majority focuses on as a matter of basic governance.

But this unified Democratic government has been distracted from the people's business. They have spent months behind closed doors putting together another reckless taxing-and-spending spree. And this obsession with party-line wish lists have led Democrats to drop the ball on basic duties. Keeping our servicemembers and our commanders waiting months for an NDAA is just one example.

The Democratic majority has also completely dropped the ball on a bipartisan appropriations process. Oh, and by the way, President Biden's proposals for funding the government would have us cut defense spending after inflation.

According to reports, China recently tested a hypersonic vehicle that is capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Just this morning, according to some early press reports, Russia may have tested some new anti-satellite weapon system. In the Middle East, President Biden's own advisors are saying that his rushed retreat from Afghanistan

will open the door for a terrorist resurgence.

It is against this dangerous backdrop that our Democratic majority does not move an NDAA until mid-November, and President Biden doesn't want defense spending to keep pace with President Biden's inflation.

Madam President, better late than never. I am glad the Democratic leader says we will finally let the full Senate consider an NDAA in the coming days. The Senate will need to have the kind of robust bipartisan floor process that is customary for this important bill, and we will need to leave extraneous items on the sidelines.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, our great country was founded on the idea that freedom leads to prosperity, which is better known as the American dream.

I have always said this country owes you only one thing, and that is an opportunity to succeed. This country gives you the opportunity to live the life you dream of because, with hard work, anything is possible. For a couple, the American dream may look like saving enough to buy their first home. For a small family business, it might look like opening its doors for the first time. For a first-generation college graduate, it might be walking across the stage, and for a soldier, returning from war with the hopes of starting a family. The American dream takes on many unique forms reflective of the opportunity that countless generations have strived to realize.

At the core of the American dream, you will find the American family because for centuries, the American dream has been rooted in the idea of family and freedom. Strong families are the foundation of strong communities. That is why we need to uplift the American family rather than to continue to rip it apart.

But recently, we have seen policies from the Democrats that inject politics into parenting, that insert the heavy hand of the Federal Government into the American home and stop at nothing to tell parents: We know best when it comes to raising your children.

Threats to the American family are knocking on the front doors of homes across the Nation as the left becomes focused on telling the American people what they want rather than listening to what they need. A prime example is the Democrats' socialist spending spree, designed to create a cradle-to-grave welfare system that does more to tear the American family down than to

build it up. Just look at the child tax credit—a once bipartisan policy initiative that has now been weaponized to benefit some families at the expense of others. If you are a working-class, married couple with children, you drew the short end of the stick. Then there is the Democrats' Federal childcare program. It is more focused on perpetuating government dependency than giving low-income families the means to stand on their own two feet.

With these proposals in their reckless tax-and-spend spree, the Democrats are picking winners and losers, and the losers are the American family. Anti-family policies like these grow the size of the government while chipping away at American freedom. We should focus on pro-family policies that put families first, policies that make achieving the American dream a reality, not something to feel shameful about.

If you are born with two parents in this country, you hit the lottery. So many children don't have the stable family that some have; they grow up with one parent or are raised by another family member. Then there are children who grow up with no parents, thrown into the foster system. It is a shame because we know stable families can provide foundations that children need to seize the American opportunities.

As we talk about supporting the American family, I want to focus on an important issue to many families across the country; that is, adoption.

November is National Adoption Month in the United States. In the United States, over 400,000 children a year don't have a safe place to call home or a loving family to care for them. The idea that children have a safe and stable home, with a family who loves them, should be something we should all agree on.

In my career, I have traveled across the country for 40 years. People from all walks of life welcomed me into their homes. I have seen firsthand the immeasurable impact that family can have on a child's life. I have seen parents who provide stable foundations, who instill the belief that with hard work, grit, and determination, anything is possible.

Success stories can be found across my State of Alabama. In fact, in 2019, Alabama had 731 adoptions—the highest number in Alabama's history.

One of those is Katie, who was adopted through the Heart Gallery of Alabama. Katie's parents adopted her at the age of 12, after years spent in and out of foster care. Her forever family provided her with the secure foundation she needed to jump-start her future. Now, Katie just completed her first year at Yale University.

Like Katie, children in our foster care systems have endless potential but need the stability that having a family brings to unlock it. While we celebrate the heartwarming stories of families being made whole, we cannot forget about the children waiting for